

The sound echoed through the house like thunder. But Scrooge was not frightened by echoes. He locked the door and walked across the hall and slowly up the stairs.

It was very dark because Scrooge only had a candle. But darkness didn't worry Scrooge. Darkness is cheap, and Scrooge liked cheap things. But before he shut the heavy door of his apartment, he looked in every room.

There was nobody in the sitting room or the bedroom. Scrooge closed his door, and then locked it. Then he took off his cravat and put on his dressing-gown and slippers. Finally he sat down in front of the fire to eat his gruel.

### Glossary

- **echoed:** heard again and again
- **cheap:** not expensive
- **cravat:** neck tie men wore in the past
- **dressing-gown:** long piece of clothing worn over night clothes
- **gruel:** food which poor people ate (made by boiling oats in water or milk)
- **slippers:** soft indoor shoes
- **thunder:** very loud sound heard in a storm

Suddenly he heard a loud clanking sound. It came from downstairs. Somebody was pulling a heavy chain over the barrels in the wine merchant's cellar.

The cellar door flew open with a bang. Then the clanking sound became much louder. It came up the stairs. It was coming straight towards his door.

'Humbug!' said Scrooge. 'I don't believe it.'

- **barrels:** large round containers for food or liquid
- **clanking:** when two metal objects hit each other
- **cellar:** room below ground
- **Humbug:** (here) nonsense!
- **chain:** rope made of metal rings
- **wine merchant:** man who buys and sells wine